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Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows. Applicant reserves the right to pursue any canceled claims at a later date.

1. (currently amended) An insulating ceramic comprising a plurality of partially filled three dimensional shapes having ~~a contiguous three dimensional boundary wall~~ an outer skin that completely surrounds encapsulates the shapes disposed in a binding matrix.
2. (original) The insulating ceramic of claim 1 wherein the plurality of partially filled shapes comprises a dimensionally stabilized array of shapes.
3. (original) The insulating ceramic of claim 1 wherein the plurality of partially filled shapes comprises shapes selected from the group consisting of oblate spheroid shapes, spheres, and shapes free of corners.
4. (currently amended) The insulating ceramic of claim 1 wherein each partially filled shape comprises an inner skeleton and ~~an~~ the outer skin.
- 21 5. (previously presented) An insulating ceramic comprising a plurality of partially filled shapes disposed in a binding matrix, wherein each partially filled shape comprises an inner skeleton and an outer skin, and wherein the outer skin of the shape ranges from about 0.1mm to about 5mm in thickness.

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